

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
 769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
 [554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along
 with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
 761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once
 told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neigh-
 bor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring
 chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant.
 We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were
 suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping.
 On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than
 he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him.
 Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the
 good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe.
 They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age
 of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by
 their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
 [304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs,
 [664] particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
 dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It
 is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living
 example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut
 where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in
 the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a
 sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's
 bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not
 even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the
 souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained,
 and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the power-
 ful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
 762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming
 anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 , Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
 673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire
 anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no
 fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

577
673 insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of
[339] unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not
784 because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kise, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangande (guardian animal of the village) or sigu (soui-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family.
262 A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person